

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 12932

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: PINT, UR
SUBJ: RUDOLF BARSHAY

1. RUDOLF BARSHAY, FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR OF THE MOSCOW CHAMBER ORCHESTRA, TOLD US AUG 15 THAT OVIR HAS REFUSED TO ACCEPT HIS APPLICATION FOR EMIGRATION TO ISRAEL. THE OSTENSIBLE REASON WAS THAT ONE OF HIS EX-WIVES (A JAPANESE CITIZEN NOW LIVING IN JAPAN) HAD TO AGREE THAT HE MIGHT LEAVE SINCE HE WAS PAYING HER ALIMONY. THIS DOCUMENT WAS MISSING FROM THE DOSSIER. BARSHAY FEELS THAT THE AUTHORITIES HAVE DECIDED NOT TO ALLOW HIM TO EMIGRATE, BUT WISH TO DRAG OUT THE PROCESS. A REFUSAL TO ACCEPT BARSHAY'S APPLICATION GIVES THE AUTHORITIES THE PRETEXT TO DENY THAT THEY REFUSED HIM PERMISSION TO EMIGRATE.

2. BARSHAY, ONE OF THE SOVIET UNION'S MOST PROMINENT MUSICAL FIGURES, SAYS THAT HE EXPECTS HE WILL LOSE HIS POSITION AS DIRECTOR OF THE ORCHESTRA BEFORE ITS SEASON STARTS ON OCT 3. HE HAS NOT YET BEEN TOLD WHEN HIS ORCHESTRA IS TO BEGIN REHEARSING, NOR HAVE TWO TRIPS PLANNED TO ROMANIA AND THE FRG IN SEPT AND OCT BEEN CONFIRMED. BARSHAY FEELS THAT HIS REMOVAL FROM HIS PRESENT POSITION WOULD NOT MAKE THE AUTHORITIES MORE WILLING TO ALLOW HIS EMIGRATION. RATHER, HE FEELS THAT HE WILL BE CONSIDERED TO LIMBO FOR THE FORE-SEEABLE FUTURE.

3. BARSHAY NOTES THAT A FACTOR CONTRIBUTING TO ANY REFUSAL

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TO ALLOW HIM TO EMIGRATE STEMS FROM THE FACT THAT THERE

ARE NOW PRACTICALLY NO ACTIVE FIRST RATE SOVIET MUSICIANS STILL IN THE USSR. THE AUTHORITIES DO NOT WISH THE DRAIN OF MUSICIANS TO THE WEST TO CONTINUE. BARSHAY SAYS THAT THIS MAY INFLUENCE THE AUTHORITIES TO REFUSE HIM PERMISSION TO LEAVE.

4. IF OVIR CONTINUES TO REFUSE TO ACCEPT HIS APPLICATION AND HE LOSES HIS PRESENT POSITION, BARSHAY INTENDS TO ORGANIZE AND INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN. ASIDE FROM PERSONAL FRIENDSHIPS WITH MANY LEADING MEMBERS OF THE WORLD MUSICAL ESTABLISHMENT, BARSHAY IS REPORTEDLY ON CLOSE PERSONAL TERMS WITH THE SISTER OF THE SHAH OF IRAN. HE SAYS HE HAS NO DOUBT THAT AN INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN ON HIS BEHALF WOULD PRODUCE A GREAT DEAL OF PUBLICITY WHICH THE SOVIET UNION WOULD FIND MOST UNWELCOME, AND ADDS THAT HE SEES THIS AS HIS ONLY HOPE.

5. COMMENT: BARSHAY HAS LONG SPOKEN PRIVATELY OF A DESIRE TO LEAVE THE USSR AND HAS IN THE PAST USED THE THREAT TO EMIGRATE TO TRY TO SECURE BETTER WORKING AND LIVING CONDITIONS. THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THAT HE HAS FORMALLY ATTEMPTED TO APPLY TO EMIGRATE, AND THERE IS NOT DOUBT HE WOULD LEAVE IF HE SECURED PERMISSION TO DO SO. WE AGREE THAT THE REFUSAL TO ACCEPT HIS APPLICATION WAS LIKELY BASED ON OTHER THAN MERE TECHNICAL GROUNDS. THE ODDS FAVOR HIS GETTING OUT EVENTUALLY, ALTHOUGH HE MAY HAVE TO ORGANIZE HIS PRESSURE CAMPAIGN. ONE FACTOR IN HIS FAVOR WOULD PRESUMABLY BE A DESIRE BY THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES TO AVOID BAD PUBLICITY CONCERNING A MAJOR FIGURE IN THE PERIOD BEFORE THE BELGRADE CSCE REVIEW CONFERENCE.

STOESSEL

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